

THAT TERRIFIC TWENTY-THIRD ROUND WHEN JEFF STOPPED CORBETT

BY HUGH S. FULLERTON.

The sixty-eighth minute of the heavyweight battle between James J. Jeffries and James J. Corbett before the Seaside Athletic Club at Coney Island on the evening of May 11, 1900, was the most dramatic in the history of boxing.

Corbett had emerged from retirement to fight Jeffries, the new coming king of the prize ring, in the face of taunts and the derision of the boxing public. A "has been," declared by many to be only a clever boxer and never a fighter, Corbett came from a year of recuperation to battle the stolid cave man who had served his apprenticeship in Corbett's own camp.

Seldom were two men more different in style or appearance. The sporting public of New York swarmed to the seaside, and among the wiser ones the news had gone forth that Corbett was fit.

The huge building was packed to suffocation on a night unearthly hot for the season. Trim, lean of loin and waist, clean cut, fast, and every muscle rippling white under satin-smooth skin Corbett faced the stolid, hairy giant who, sullen and lowering, slouched toward him.

From the instant that Charlie White, the referee, stepped back as the first gong clanged Corbett showed his skill. Smiling, he raced in and out, sidestepped, dodged, and with whiplike lefts he battered the sullen visage of the giant who lumbered after him. Round after round he toyed with the hulking champion, cutting his face with whiplike blows, driving short jabs to the huge barrel of a body and taunting his adversary as he danced always just out of reach.

The twentieth round came. Jeffries was tired, hurt, sullen and vicious. Behind him a slim elderly man, the greatest general the prize ring ever has known, goaded him on. It was

Billy Delaney, maker of champions, spurring, urging, taunting and forcing Jeffries to keep fighting.

Corbett's smile had disappeared. He was pantherlike and the light of victory shown in his face. He had the fight won, his great foe cut and slashed and beaten. Again he was within reach of the championship. At the end of the twentieth round Corbett, his eyes flashing, jumped back to his chair.

"I can get him. I can finish him," he said excitedly. "Let me at him. I'll finish him."

"Whoa, whoa," cautioned Brady. "You've got him beat. Stay away. For heavens sake stay away and cut him up."

"He's tired," remarked Con McVey. "He's dog tired, but he's dangerous. Keep away from him."

The twenty-first round passed. Jeffries, plodding after his will-o-the-wisp foe, lunged viciously. Twice Corbett laughed tauntingly as he danced out of the way of terrific blows.

Over in one corner (Delaney told me this long afterward) Jeffries, weary, sick, discouraged, was grumbling and cursing. "You big yellow stiff," gritted Delaney. "You going to quit. You dog—go fight—"

With abuse and scorn he spurred his champion on. In the other corner Corbett, in a frenzy of excitement, begged his backers to let him go. Again and again they begged and pleaded with him to be cautious.

The twenty-second round came and passed, Corbett keeping away, flicking the beaten giant with cutting lefts, always keeping just out of range and Jeffries stumbled after him.

"I'll go in and finish him," said Corbett as he leaped for the twenty-third. "He's licked."

"For God's sake, Jim, keep away," begged Brady.

In the other corner Delaney was using the goad of his sarcasm, lashed